
Z-2298
BP DEVELOPERS
NB TO HB

STAFF REPORT
July 13, 2006

REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioners, with consent of owners and represented by Vester & Associates, are requesting the rezoning of a 3-acre tract from NB to HB. No proposed use has been given. The site is located at the northeast corner of Frontage Road and SR 26E in the City of Lafayette, Fairfield 24(SE) 23-4.

ZONING HISTORY AND AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

In 1986 this property was rezoned from R1 to LB, Local Business. With the adoption of the Unified Zoning Ordinance in 1998, all LB zoned land became NB. The area between this site and the interchange is checkered with NB and HB zoning; both of these zoning districts can be found on either side of Frontage Road. 26 Crossings commercial subdivision is across SR 26 and is zoned GB. Land adjacent to the east is zoned R1.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The site in question is unimproved. Last year, the long-standing single-family home was demolished and only the driveway remains. A heavily wooded ravine (which is also a legal drain) cuts through the northeast corner of the property, separating the majority of the site from Meadowbrook Subdivision which is adjacent to the east.

The area surrounding the I-65/SR 26 interchange is mainly commercial. Some of the uses surrounding the interchange include hotels, restaurants, gas stations, a bank and apartment buildings.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

The subject site is situated at the corner of Frontage Road, a local road, and SR 26E, a primary arterial. An existing driveway serves the site from Frontage Road. Traffic counts taken in 2003 by the County indicated that 4,051 cars passed this site daily on Frontage Road. Counts taken in 2005 by INDOT showed that 29,286 (seasonally unadjusted) cars traveled along this stretch of 26.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Even though no record could be found by the County Health Department, it is suspected that this property had always been served by an individual septic and well system. Any new development on this property would be required to tie into City utilities.

A regulated drain cuts through the northeast corner of this property. Development of this land may require review by both the Lafayette City Engineer's office and the County Drainage Board.

A Type C bufferyard with 4 standard plant units per 150' of length is required where HB zoning abuts R1 zoning. While this area is currently heavily wooded and may not need additional plantings, the Administrative Officer for Lafayette could require the installation of the bufferyard if the vegetation is ever removed, reduced or does not meet the bufferyard requirements.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Many uses that are permitted by right in the Neighborhood Business (NB) zone are also allowed by right in the Highway Business (HB) zone. However, eating and drinking establishments that have a drive-through component in Lafayette are only allowed in the NB zone with a special exception but are permitted by right in the HB zone. While the proposed use has not been given, staff suspects that this may be the reason for the request.

According to the County Assessor's records, the house that once was located here was built in 1945. Over the years, with aid of the interstate construction, this area around the interchange developed commercially-- leaving this house surrounded by business uses on three sides. The *Adopted Land Use Plan* designates this property and those to the south and west for commercial development and land to the north and east as residential. Since the legal drain and surrounding woods act as buffers between the homes to the east and the commercial zones to the west, business zoning makes sense for this site.

The intent of the HB zone is to provide areas where interregional highways intersect each other for the needs of the traveling public. With the I-65 and SR 26 interchange immediately west, Highway Business, rather than Neighborhood Business makes the most sense here. With guidance from the *Comprehensive Plan*, the existing heavy vegetation on the north and east sides of the tract, and its proximity to the Interstate interchange, staff can support this request.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval

